

Brookhaven Council Activities, March 2016 through February 2017

Evaluation of Tenure cases:

Four cases were presented to the Council. The Departmental breakdown was as follows:

Physics: 3

Collider-Accelerator: 1

Memos were submitted to the Laboratory Director, Doon Gibbs, in August of 2016. All cases ultimately resulted in the award of tenure.

Communication with the Director:

There was a decrease in the number of monthly meetings with the Director over the year due, in part, to the unexpected departure of the council chair from BNL in late 2016. This was corrected at the beginning of 2017, with discussions focused primarily on stabilization of the scientific staff numbers and the role of tenure at BNL. The Council Sec'y temporarily assumed the Chair's role and continued for the remainder of the term. Both Council Chair and Secretary attended meetings with the Director (Doon Gibbs) and Deputy for Science (Bob Tribble). When available, the Deputy for Operations (Jack Anderson) joined.

Scientific Staff Matters:

Tenure: Uniformity of tenure across the laboratory: The Council's concerns, that no tenure cases have ever been put forth by the CFN, were addressed again this year. Records show that Emilio Mendez, the CFN Director at the time, met with Council on this issue back in October 2012, still no cases were put forward. The Council requested a visit by both Charles Black (CFN Director) and Emilio Mendez (Deputy ALD for Energy Sciences), which took place at the October meeting. The Council then formulated an opinion and its recommendation was sent to the Laboratory Director in January. The recommendation was to have CFN follow the policy for tenure submissions as outlined in the SMBS and to be consistent with the other departments, divisions and facilities at BNL. This was a topic for discussion with the Director when he visited the Council's February meeting. A committee to consider tenure has been established and report findings to the BSA board. Peter Steinberg agreed to represent Council on this committee. A resolution on CFN will likely wait until the overall issue of tenure at BNL is clarified.

Reductions in Force and Involuntary Termination cases: A number of RIF cases involving the scientific staff occurred throughout the year with a significant number of continuing appointments in Physics. There was one RIF for financial exigency (FE) affecting a tenured scientist, and a sub-committee was formed to investigate and advise on the process. The case was ultimately resolved with the affected scientist taking retirement from BNL (with emeritus status). The PHENIX group was especially hard hit with RIFs, and questions regarding the process were brought to the Council's attention with a committee formed to investigate and make recommendations. There was also one RIF for FE in Condensed Matter Physics. Another case for the RIF of a tenured scientist was started but not resolved during this term of Council.

Staff Services: The services that affect the quality of life for both scientific staff and other employees continued to be reduced, and the Council transmitted its concerns to management. The trend is not good, but the effort to establish a Discovery Park adjacent to the apartment area continues and is supported by Council.

LDRD Program:

Four members from Council participated in evaluation of LDRD proposals. These included one member from each Directorate and an outside representative requested by Council to represent Computational Sciences.

Goldhaber Fellowship:

Council provided 4 members to review applications for Goldhaber Fellowships. The program is managed by Kathi Barkigia. Funding existed for at least one award with a 2nd award likely this year.

Membership Apportionment:

The Council addressed its apportionment across the various Departments and Divisions following the reorganization of the Laboratory over the past few years. Several changes were proposed and adopted. 1) The Sustainable Energy Department is now grouped with Condensed Matter Physics / Materials Science and the CFN. 2) The Computational Sciences Directorate does not yet have sufficient staff to represent itself on Council. Discussions with the CS Director (Kirsten Kleese Van Dam) indicated that a temporary grouping with Physics would make the most sense. 3) To better match the changes in staff populations, the number of representatives for CAD and NSLS-II were increased by one each, while Biology was decreased by one and the SET representative was absorbed into CMP/MSD. Thus the total membership number remained the same as before. These changes took force during the February 2017 election of new members.

Laboratory Retirement Committee:

Bob McGraw served as the Council Representative on the Laboratory Retirement Committee, formed by HR Director Robert Lincoln in late 2015. Larry Carr also served at the request of Lincoln on a Phased Retirement Committee to consider new routes toward retirement. The latter committee met several times in 2016 and early 2017 with discussions centered on legal constraints (labor laws) for work at BNL and developing retirement scenarios that could appeal to the staff and the Lab. The terms for the various scenarios (e.g. impact on benefits) are somewhat complex and most of the committee's work involved clarifying the issues for each. No conclusions have been reached and the committee will continue its work through FY17.